WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ECONOMICS?

The Saturday Review of Literature

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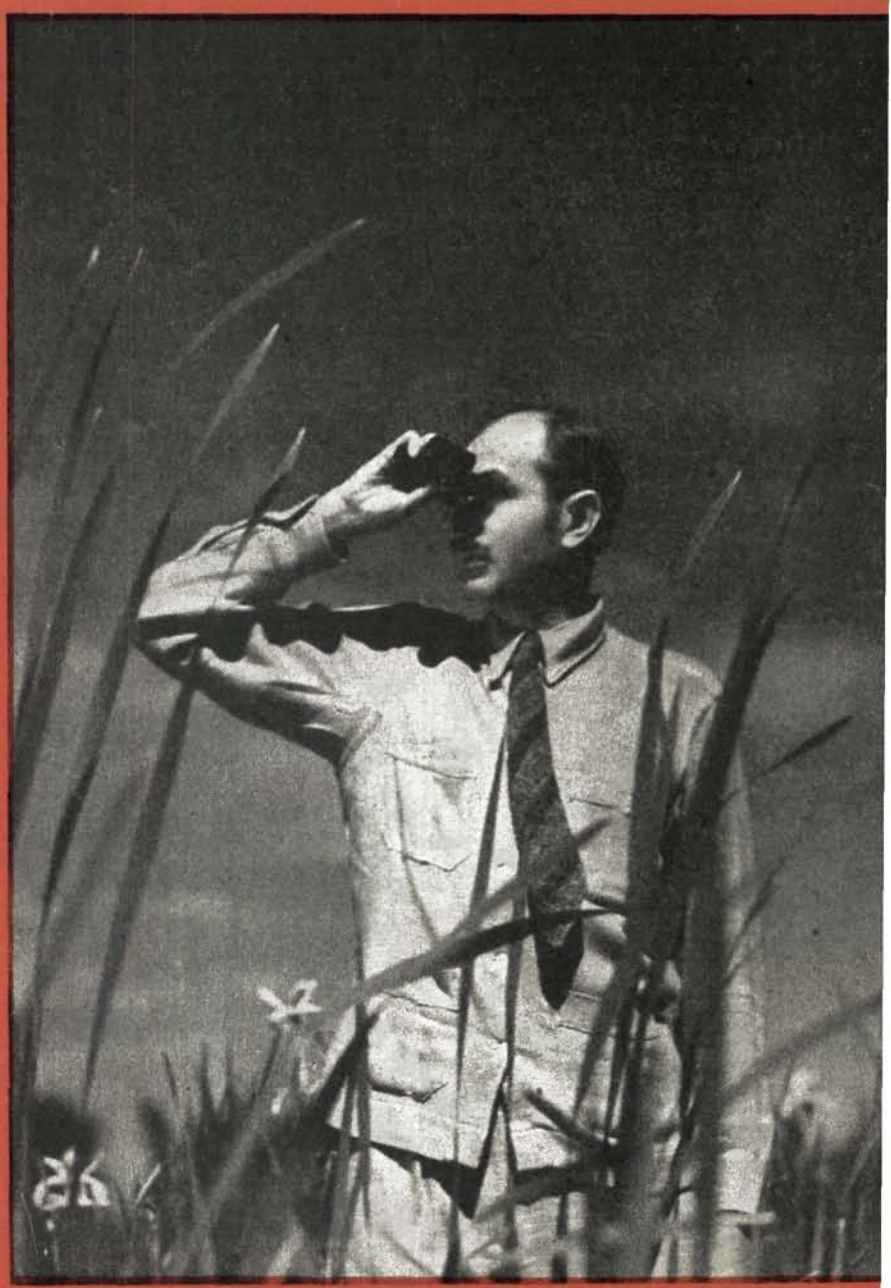

Don Wallace

DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE: "Plants do not feel, think, make love, go into tantrums, or have any sort of soul or intelligence. But plants constantly act like it" . . . *(See page 5)*

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"In its way, as splendid a contribution to the knowledge of cultural life of America as is THE FLOWERING OF NEW ENGLAND."
MARY ELLEN CHASE

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By Esther Cloudman Dunn

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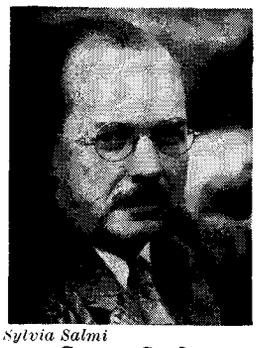


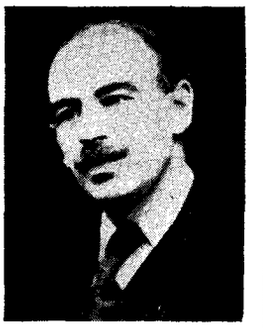
Sylvia Salmi
George Soule

Jerome Frank

What's the Matter with Economics?

BY

WILLIAM O. SCROGGS



J. M. Keynes

Bachrach
Francis B. Sayre

THESE are times that try economists' souls. Obviously, this statement implies that they have souls, and in some quarters it may be considered radical. It was once the fashion, at least among the literati, to regard economists as soulless. Perhaps it was Carlyle who originated this notion. Having in mind the gloomy doctrine of Malthus and the harsh teachings of the classicists concerning the "iron law of wages" and the consequently irremediable lot of the laborer, he referred slightingly to economics as "that dismal science." On dismal matters Carlyle was no mean authority, and so the epithet has stuck to this day.

But there is still more to this sad story. In the eighteenth century Edmund Burke, reflecting on revolutionary events in France, was even more severe in his judgment of those who dabbled in the dismal science. "The age of chivalry is gone," he moaned; "that of sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever." If an economist of today, therefore, finds the vials of literary wrath being emptied upon his befuddled head, he may take comfort in the thought that his critics are only following precedent.

From further attacks of this kind, however, the economists now have little to fear. They hope eventually to live down their past reputation as an inhuman horde harping with something akin to fatalism on certain laws whose inexorable working seemed to bode no good for a large part of mankind. Since the days of Malthus, Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, economics has become considerably humanized. Its former deductive methods have been supplemented, though not superseded, by inductive processes and organized research, and today one of its chief concerns is to obtain the knowledge which should underlie all constructive proposals for social betterment.

Meanwhile, the World War and its aftermath have brought the economists face to face with facts and forces which were never dreamed of in their pre-war philosophy. Only ten years ago a group of the country's leading economists, coöperating with a committee of important industrialists under the chairmanship of Mr. Herbert Hoover, prepared a two-volume report entitled "Recent Economic Changes." Valuable as this publication is for an understanding of the economic developments and trends of that time, it contains no hint of the recession of trade and industry which lay immediately ahead. Instead, the survey was buoyantly optimistic. "We seem only to have touched the fringe of our potentialities," it said; and added, a few pages farther on, "Our situation is fortunate, our momentum is remarkable." Read in the cold light of later events, these words seem remote from reality.

Some of the major forces which have since been let loose upon the world have been succinctly described by Professor Eugene Staley in his recent volume, "World Economy in Transition." Here we see the counterplay of power politics and industrial mechanization, two of the major forces in the world of today. While power politics has been intensifying economic nationalism and bringing both production and consumption under stricter control, even to the point of regimentation, mechanization is creating a need for wider industrial organization and is at the same time increasing economic interdependence. Hardly had this thought-provoking analysis of the strains and stresses in present-day economy come from the press, however, before another war burst upon the world to complicate the problem still further.

In the midst of these soul-trying events, the economists are toiling strenuously to familiarize themselves with the new and strange phenomena. In spite of their prodigious labors, it must be admitted that in the recent past economists as a group have incurred a new kind of criticism and seem to have suffered somewhat in the estimation of that small but select portion of the general public which is aware of their existence. The burden of the complaint runs somewhat like this: "Why didn't those fellows do something about that Big Crash in 1929; and now that we've still got depression, why aren't they finding a remedy? There must be something wrong with economics or the economists, or with both; otherwise the country wouldn't be in such a hell of a fix."

Under this criticism the economists have remained unperturbed. Probably many of them haven't yet heard about it. On the part of those who have had the matter brought to their attention, there is a readiness to admit imperfections and past errors, but some of them insist that most of their alleged shortcomings actually indicate faults in their critics. "The main reason for this unfavorable comment," said one economist who was queried on this matter, "is to be found in the fact that few people know an economist when they see one." There may be more than a grain of truth in this observation. Many who are called economists have a dubious right to the title; but there are no legal bars to their assuming it, and they manage some-

Next Week

LEVIATHAN GERMANY:
WHAT IS THIS WAR ABOUT?
By Harry Scherman

THE LIVING TRADITION
By SIMEON STRUNSKY
Reviewed by Henry F. Pringle

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how to get by with it. Our newspapers, too, have sometimes bestowed the title rather liberally. When they refer to a man as an economist, he may be all that and possibly also a scholar and a statesman, or he may be merely one of the garden variety of stock-market tipsters. Many in the last-named category glory in such a high-brow title, believing that it is good for their business, even as the book-maker at the races sometimes calls himself a "turf accountant."

The pseudo-economists have certainly added no luster to the reputation of the *bona fide* group, and it is possible that they have done something toward dimming its prestige. For in matters economic as well as medical the man with the cure-all is the one who catches the ear — and too often the coin—of the populace. Barnum, as we all know, had a word for it. Not all the suckers are to be found in the ranks of the ignorant and lowly. Some of our most intelligent fellow-citizens plumped mighty hard for the brand of economic ballyhoo which flourished in 1928. They prophesied the eventual elimination of poverty and promised a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage.

It is, of course, no discredit to a science when a few over-optimistic disciples or a group of intruding mountebanks claim to have solved some of its baffling problems. That happens quite regularly in the field of therapeutics; but it does not cause us to exclaim, "What's the matter with medicine?" When we find a charlatan vending snake oil we don't find fault with doctors; instead, as the spirit moves us, we either pity or despise the rascal's gullible victims. Medicine and its allied sciences have attained a status which is so clearly defined and so well understood that they are not attacked when physicians do not work miracles or when quacks prostitute a noble calling to base ends. Economics and all the social sciences, on the other hand, are still in the making. In some respects they are like Kipling's ship before she found herself. Owing to the complicated character of the materials with which these sciences are concerned, their development cannot be hurried and their application is unavoidably limited. Those who are impatient with the ailments of human society demand too much when they expect social scientists to diagnose the malady, write a prescription, and soon have the patient on the road to recovery.

Among the social sciences which deal with problems of the immediate present, economics seems to be the one nearest maturity. The fruits of its research are slowly but surely developing a solid base of principles and methods which it must have in order to qualify as a full-fledged science. The laboratory work of such organizations as the Brookings Institution and the National Bureau of Economic Research have rendered notable service, and for a clearer understanding of economic developments throughout the world, the Economic Intelligence Service of the League of Nations is performing a work which has proved indispensable. The products of these and other institutions, engaged in parallel activities, are too numerous and cover too wide a field to permit a detailed description; but extensive as they are, they constitute only a small part of the publications embodying the results of intensive research in the problems of agriculture, industrial management, transportation, international and national finance, international trade, money and credit, price movements, wages, living standards, and so forth.

The growth of economics is slow, because in the pursuit of his calling the economist encounters handicaps from which the natural scientists are happily free. In the first place, the objects of his investigations will not "stay put"; they are always in a state of flux. Biological organisms in the laboratory may be in the process of evolution, but their transformation within a millennium will probably be infinitesimal, while changes in economic attitudes and institutions are often kaleidoscopic.

The economist encounters another handicap because he is a part of what he is investigating and objectivity is not easily attained. The matters with which he is concerned are usually of a sort to stimulate the emotions. The mere mention of government ownership will cause some people to see red, while others will stand up and cheer. It is much easier to be coldly detached when using the test tube or the microscope than it is when investigating the sit-down strike.

These brief and oversimplified explanations of a few significant features of the present state of economics may help to explain why economists have not measured up to the expectations of their critics. But what do these critics really expect? By piecing together the comment from various sources we can get a composite picture of their ideal economist. He would have to unite in his person the attributes and functions of (1) a productive scientist, (2) an expert framer of public policies, and (3) a reliable, if not infallible, prophet. Of course, "there ain't no sech animal," but some people will not be satisfied until the critter finally appears.

How far does the economist fall short of this ideal? In the first place, is he a scientist; or, to state the question in another way, is economics a science? The textbooks used in our schools say that it is, but that is *ex parte* evidence, and it has been chal-

(*Continued on page* 16)

Mr. Eliot's Cat Book

BY MELVILLE CANE

"Mr. T. S. Eliot's intimate friends receive from time to time typewritten verses which are apparently anonymous but which are always identifiable. The poems, which concern cats, are present here." Publisher's blurb.

WHEN T. S. Eliot stoops to folly,—
A circumstance to marvel at,—
He bids adieu to melancholy
And lightly turns to thoughts of cat.

And lightly turns a nimble ballad
In praise of Thomas or of Tab,
With here and there a hint, though valid,
Of something else by Lear or "Bab".

When T. S. Eliot sips his malmsey
And mulls and mellows by the grate,
He now and then succumbs to whimsey,
A weakness one must deprecate.

To poetize the genus feline
And please alike adults and chil'n,
He swings a wide, elastic free-line
Which makes one think at times of Milne.

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The Sun Trap

FLOWERING EARTH. By Donald Culross Peattie. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1939. 260 *pp., with index.* $2.50.

Reviewed by NORMAN TAYLOR

PROFESSIONAL botanists will rightly be thrown into something like impotent fury by this book. Not because it is full of errors, —actually it is singularly free of them —but because it says what needs saying so much better than they have ever said it. Hardly anyone else in America, and perhaps only Bower in England, could possibly have written it so well.

Hence some of the rage—and not a little of the popularity of the author. Among thoughtful but untrained people "Flowering Earth" does for the plant world what Carrel has done for medical research. And this, in spite of the cloistered experts, is precisely what science, and especially botany, needs rather desperately.

The book is necessarily anthropomorphic, and this will send additional shivers down the already well-chilled spines of some botanists. They constantly and reproachfully remind us, what Peattie never forgets — that plants do not feel, think, make love, go into tantrums, or have any sort of soul or intelligence. But plants constantly act like it. And the description of plant response in terms of human behavior is, as the late C. E. Bessey once said, "an admirable way of looking at things." It is exactly this which the author has done and so made "Flowering Earth" a model of popular scientific writing.

Wood engraving, by Paul Landacre, from "Flowering Earth."

The critical and the expert are rightly concerned over much that poses as "popularization" of science. Some of it has dragged the majesty and beauty of the plant world down to the trivialities of the tabloids. But Peattie never does this. Instead there is lucid prose, often poetic imagery, and never once does he forget that the pageantry of plant life is not a mere phrase-mongers' pasture.

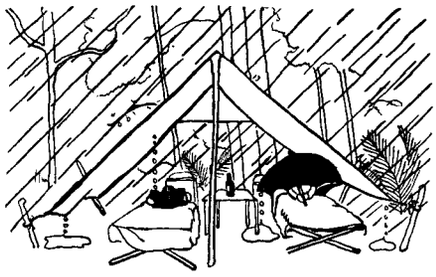
The author expressly warns us that "Flowering Earth" is no textbook, but it should be required reading in all colleges and for everyone above the groundlings. He has left out "all the things that would make it thorough and dull." To have made it so would have been incredibly easy, because it is on a subject "often made inconceivably tiresome under the name of botany."

Perhaps the best illustration of his method is the handling of chlorophyll, the basic green stuff of plants and the substance upon which all life depends. There is what is called an endless "literature" on chlorophyll, necessary, precise, and for the average reader, hopeless. Peattie makes it the fascinating thing it really is—a "sun trap" which captures the energy of light, transforming inorganic materials into living substances. And he catches the significance of it all, for chlorophyll is not just a synthesis of energy and chemicals. "It is the same unchanging green stuff from age to age, passed without perceptible improvement from evolving plant to plant. What it is and does, so complex upon examination, lies about us tranquil and simple, with the simplicity of a miracle."

There is not a chemical formula in the book, and no botanical glossary because it needs none. Not a term is used that the context does not define, and this is no mean achievement.

Another illustration of the author's method and the consequent rage of the professionals must suffice. To them a flower is an organ necessary for seed production, the obstetrics of which most textbooks make pretty depressing. To Peattie it is an "organ that lives to give life away; that is borne to die in the bearing of seed. It is the blind beauty, the lovely fragrance, the twisted art, the seduction without shame, that we adore, and call a flower." This is not just lush writing. It is literally and precisely true, but put as no botanist has ever put it, and with something very close to genius.

Norman Taylor is the editor of "The Garden Dictionary" and botanical editor of Webster's New International Dictionary.



Drawing by Agnes Newton Keith, from "Land below the Wind."

Americans in North Borneo

LAND BELOW THE WIND. By Agnes Newton Keith. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1939. 371 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by KATHRENE PINKERTON

BOOKS of adventure and exploration in out-of-the-way places, written by men, are infinite. Stories by their wives are too few. This feminine role of going along takes doing, and Agnes Newton Keith not only did it but has written about it with such humor and understanding that her Atlantic $5,000 prize winner, "Land Below the Wind," becomes something far more than an account of life in North Borneo.

An American woman with college, professional, and city background, she says she had no preparation for her life as wife of the Conservator of Forests and Director of Agriculture. But she proves she had the best sort of preparation, for she had courage, a sense of humor, and a capacity to feel as well as to see a strange country. She says her husband kicked her into writing the book. Perhaps, but once started she wrote with such zest and enlivening detail that she takes her readers along on her adventure.

The Keiths lived in Sandakan, capital of North Borneo, of whose fourteen thousand people only seventy-five were Europeans. Their hill-top house had an amiable disposition but negligent manners. It leaked like a sieve except in the library, a room within a room, from which not only rain but flying ants, beetles, mosquitoes, lizards, cicadas, moths, cockroaches, mud wasps, and silverfish were outlawed. The staff, assembled from several races, included two Chinese amahs, Arusap, a Murat houseboy with a habit of periodic vacations, and a Javanese gardener. A small boy was added, mostly because they had a dog, and every dog must have a boy. Occasional additions were wives, friends, and dependents who brought complications. But we understand this polyglot menage because Mrs. Keith understood it with such fine sympathy, and we follow with interest the multicolored threads of life in the servants'

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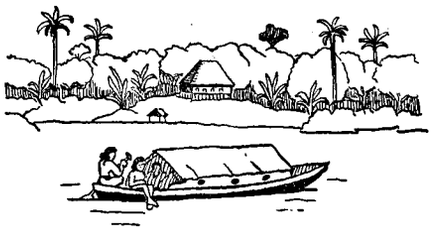

compound because that life had emotional significance for the author. The garden housed a group of semi-Siamese cats, one dog, two gibbon apes, sometimes an orangutan, and various visiting jungle creatures. Animals become persons in that garden.

The household, human and animal, would justify the writing of the book, but Mrs. Keith did not always stay at home. She went on expeditions with her husband when he inspected forests, and she went with the understanding that she must not delay the party. She spent weeks on tropical islands in the Sulu sea and traveled rivers in which crocodiles lurked. She fought her way over slippery rocks while the men tracked their boat up rapids, and she spent days walking through jungle and over plains. She was bruised by falls, attacked by insects which sting, bite, and bore, soaked by rains, threatened by floods, and burned by the tropical sun.

But she does not stop with mere description of the country. The land is strained through her emotions, and she feels as well as sees it. She imparts a sense of the jungle, of the river's swift rush between green walls, of bathing in the liquid sunlight which is the Sulu sea. Few of us will visit North Borneo, but Mrs. Keith has permitted the reader to add a new far country to his experience.

In the latter part of the book the Mrs. Keith of the jungle expedition is not the person who, with laughter and courage, had taken hardships in her stride. She becomes suddenly feminine and too absorbed by her own physical inadequacies and emotional adjustments. Had this break in her bright armor occurred early, it would be understandable. The pity is that a book so beautifully high-spirited should, even for a moment, have slipped out of gear.

But it is only an unfortunate bump in an otherwise smooth and delightful road. Mrs. Keith's book is charming and possesses that quality a good book must have; it brings us into intimate contact with the writer. We not only see a new country from the inside but we meet a very likable person.

Fifty pen-and-ink drawings by the author help the reader to realize the characters, human and animal.

Kathrene Pinkerton is the author of "Wilderness Wife."

Happy, and Not Afraid to Say So

A GOODLY FELLOWSHIP. By Mary Ellen Chase. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 305 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

BELIEVING, as I do, that there is no profession more adventurous, more exciting, more thrilling than that of teaching, it is a pleasure to read this autobiographical testimony. Mary Ellen Chase is more widely known as a novelist; but in this book, after thirty pages of childhood and youth, she confines herself almost entirely to her experiences as a teacher. There are few active teachers who have combined success in teaching with success in creative writing. In general, while writing is good for the teacher, teaching is bad for writing; a reason is that one writes in solitude; when Carlyle's hands began to shake, he had to give up composition, because as he could not write with any one else in the room, he could not dictate. In teaching, however, not only must there necessarily be others in the room, but the teacher must impress their minds with reiteration, emphasis, exaggeration, qualities fatal to what should be a mature literary style. The famous remark by Emerson, "Don't argue; repeat the assertion," applies far more to oral than to written communication.

Miss Chase has written her best books when farthest away from the classroom; she went to England, hired a house for two years, and in seclusion wrote "Dawn in Lyonesse," and other admirable stories and essays.

There are thousands who have "abandoned the law for literature," for the law used to be a profession often chosen by those who did not want to be either physicians or clergymen; even as according to Dean Briggs, the degree of B.S. did not mean that the recipient knew any science, it meant he did *not* know any Latin. There are only scores who have abandoned teaching for literature. One of many qualities I admire in Miss Chase is that while she loves to write, she also loves to teach; hence, faced with the choice between two good things, she wisely chose both. Having tasted the excitement of teaching and lecturing, she will not give them up.

She is enormously, obstreperously, outrageously *happy,* and is not afraid to say so; with her there are no dull days. She is honest, she is sincere; there is not a false note in her song of joy.

Somewhat late in her career she took up public lecturing on literature; and when I recall the statements of those who have ridiculed the audiences who have paid them, and have felt it necessary to apologize for earning money by speaking, it is refreshing to read what Miss Chase says. After describing various humorous happenings, and lamenting what she thinks are her shortcomings as a lecturer,

> I continue to give lectures here and there for only one reason, a reason identical with that which moves nine-tenths of the human race toward any sort of action: *I like to do so.* I enjoy such peregrinations, such fleeting, chance acquaintanceships, in spite of many sad moments over the character of my public addresses. . . . For I am among those who glory in the possession of a country which, from ocean to ocean, holds within itself so many sure and certain glimpses of eternal life.

It will be observed that although she never takes herself too seriously, she always takes her audiences seriously. It would be well if all public lecturers followed her example.

It was fortunate, too, that she began her public lecturing at the University of Minnesota with that admirable woman, Marjorie Nicolson; and today they are colleagues at Smith.

Miss Chase's sense of humor has ever made her aware of her exact latitude and longitude; humor carries with it the power of self-criticism; in teaching small and big boys in country district schools and adolescents in great universities, she has always known exactly where she was and what she was doing. I have never read a book more refreshingly honest.

And in all her happy life, the happiest part of it has been and is her connection with Smith College, where she has been teaching for the last thirteen years. Like every undergraduate, like every member of the faculty, her attitude toward President Neilson is very little this side of idolatry. I have known many admirable college Presidents; but I have never known

From the jacket of "A Goodly Fellowship"

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any one more admired, more respected, and more beloved by his students and his associates than President Neilson. In years to come, he will be regarded as people in the South regard Robert E. Lee, with absolute reverence. The best of all reasons for this worship is enigmatical; one would have to understand, analyse, and explain the mystery of personality. But there are certain qualities in this man which are salient; he is absolutely honest, absolutely sincere, has the British humor of understatement, combines idealism with shrewdness, and with infallible tact.

A Modern Anabasis

THE MARCH OF THE HUNDRED. By Manuel Komroff. New York: Coward-McCann. 1939. 305 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN SCOTT MABON

MR. KOMROFF'S new book is intended as an allegorical representation of humanity's journey through the mad world of the last twenty years—the years of a peace, as he reiterates, more terrible even than war. Like Xenophon's Army of the Ten Thousand, the members of his little band of a hundred soldiers are on a march. Where they may be, whither they are going, even who they are, they do not know. All they know is that they long for home, for a little security and warmth. They do not find it; but there is another and a greater goal of these pilgrims' progress, and its discovery brings them new courage and hope.

There are limitless potentialities in such a treatment of the chaos of modern life. Some of them are realized in the beginning of the tale, which is enveloped in an atmosphere of fantasy that is both ironically suggestive and moving. Mr. Komroff may seem at times to be over-ambitious: it is a dangerous assumption of creative responsibility, for example, to introduce a comic character like Doctor Zora by referring to his likeness to Sancho Panza and Falstaff—doubly so when the responsibility remains undischarged. But much is redeemed by such a sequence of inspired irony as the Hundred's attempt to determine their identity by ascertaining the identity of an enemy.

So fine is the promise of this book that one wishes Mr. Komroff had stuck to his original intention. The whole power of allegory depends upon its symbolic indirectness of utterance. The more explicit the expression, the less effective it becomes. Unhappily, Mr. Komroff concludes with John Donne that his is a theme "for reason, much too strong for fantasy," and he proceeds "to make dreams truths, and fables histories." Ruthlessly he rends the veils he himself has woven, destroys the illusion he has created, by introducing all sorts of cold facts, statistics, and direct comments on unemployment, the Versailles Treaty, the cost of the late war, the paradox of privation amidst plenty, and so on. By the substitution of "truths" for dreams, the bread of truth is transformed into the stale crumbs of truism.

Not the least unfortunate aspect of the shift is that Mr. Komroff himself appears to recognize it when one of his little men, Meeker, is made to say, "I find it hard to embrace these realities. . . . I still believe my first conception was the more truthful one. The outside facts may not have tallied but the essence, that is important; the rest is only rind and pulp and a semblance of something that is often not quite so." But though the book forsakes the method and language of literature for that of a rather rhetorical journalism, it nevertheless deals thoughtfully with some of the profoundest questions of our time and remains, in spots, excitingly suggestive.

Guns along the Hudson

IF NOT VICTORY. By Frank O. Hough. New York: Carrick & Evans. 1939. 335 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IN "Renown" Mr. Hough published last year a stirring novel of the Revolution, in which Benedict Arnold was the central figure, and a considerable number of other celebrities, from Washington down, appeared grouped about him. It was an ambitious undertaking, and the result was generally regarded as a distinct success. In this new novel Mr. Hough continues to deal with the Revolution and the Hudson Valley. But his hero this time is a plain Westchester County farm boy, Washington makes only a fleeting appearance in the book, and the one person known to fame who figures at any extent in it is General William Heath. The three principal characters are simply three ordinary Westchester youths caught up into a company of New York volunteers—Abe Kronkhyte of Bedford, Jogn Odell of Philipse Manor, and Brom Dyckman of Kingsbridge. Mr. Hough assures us that all three had their counterparts in actual history; he tells us, too, that the book is based on documentary sources. His novel shows evidence of careful study of the history of the period and of the whole terrain of Westchester County. But its pages do not smell of the lamp, for it is a fresh and racy tale of adventure.

From the jacket design of "If Not Victory"

In its way it is just as ambitious as Mr. Hough's earlier novel, for it challenges comparison with Cooper's "Spy." Enoch Crosby appears here, as he did in Cooper's classic story. The setting is that same ground which Cooper described so well, the wide area between Kingsbridge and Peekskill. Both writers deal with the perils of a district contested by two armies, and roved over by Cowboys and Skinners. But Mr. Hough's theme is entirely different from that of his predecessor. His story lacks the large simplicity of Cooper's novel; it is more episodic and its style is quicker of pace. He offers a study, moreover, not of a confirmed patriot whose devotion challenged the direst perils and made the heaviest sacrifices, but of a green country lad who hardly knows at first whether he wishes to stand with King or with Congress, and is brought to patriotism only by slow experience.

The great merit of Mr. Hough's book is that it is more than a swiftly-told story of adventure; it is a psychological study as well. The farm boy Abe was ready at first to fight in the ranks of the loyalists. He was actually captured at different times by both armies. As a member of the Westchester Guides he had his share of hairbreadth escapes, and saw plenty of the outrages of which men on both sides were capable. He had his taste of a British prison in New York under a particularly brutal Hessian commander. Little by little, as a result of all he saw, heard, and experienced, a true passion for this new American nation that was struggling for survival, for this land in which he had been born and bred, takes possession of him. Mr. Hough leaves him midway in the war. "Maybe the war's made a brute out of me," he bursts out. "But there's one thing I've learned out of all the hell I've been through! this here is my country, and the people in it are my people." It is a true and convincing climax.

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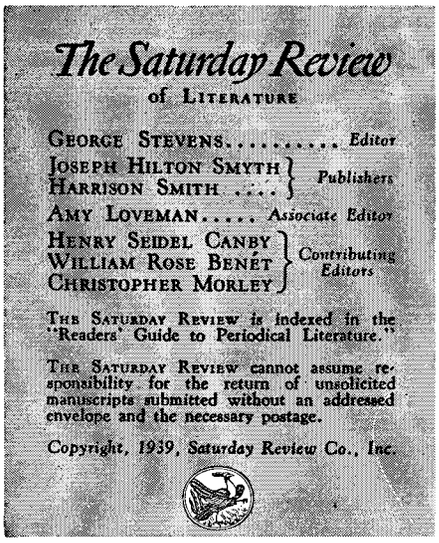
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Opie Read and Zane Grey

Opie Percival Read b., Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 22, 1852; d., Chicago, Nov. 2, 1939.
Zane Grey b., Zanesville, O., Jan. 31, 1875; d., Altadena, Calif., Oct. 23, 1939.

SOMETHING more than their having died only ten days apart link the names of Opie Read and Zane Grey. Both of them represented a story-telling tradition that is peculiarly American, albeit different phases of that tradition. Read was of the line of Mark Twain; Grey was of the line of the prolific writers fostered by Erasmus Beadle and Street & Smith. One had his literary ancestry in Benjamin Franklin, Petroleum V. Nasby, Artemus Ward, "Uncle Remus," and "Sut Lovingood"; the other had his literary ancestry in the dime novels about Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, and the Wild West—the line that produced Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and Owen Wister's "The Virginian." Read was an articulator of the robust spirit of democratic individualism which permeated the people who settled and built the river towns of the Mississippi Valley: he expressed their mores, their idiom, their lusty appetites, their quick tempers, their code of behavior, their disposition toward homely philosophy, their delight in extravagance, expansiveness, and humorous exaggeration, and, above all, their essential recklessness, impatience with restraint, and open defiance of the Eastern seaboard's notions of culture and polish. Grey brought about the vicarious wish-fulfillment of millions of sedentary workers in the office warrens of cities and industrial towns—of imprisoned men to whom a new Zane Grey novel was a splendid escape into a wild, free dreamland of limitless horizons, where the problems of life are reduced to the simplest elements and where justice triumphs over evil, the wages of courage and uprightness are true love and genuine happiness, and where man may breathe in freedom.

News of the death of Opie Read must have come as a surprise to most of the readers and writers of the present generation—not surprise that he was dead but surprise that he had been alive all these years. For Read was eighty-six when he died; he had outlived the height of his vogue as an itinerant story-teller from the Chatauqua and other lecture platforms more than thirty years ago; his name meant so little to post-war readers that when Richard R. Smith brought out Read's book of fascinating autobiographical anecdotes, "I Remember," the book fell flat, although the author had seen Grant, Lincoln, and Morgan (the raider) plain, he had drunk deep with Sir Henry Irving, toured with Lightfoot Visscher, talked with Carl Schurz, and held provincial audiences spellbound from coast to coast; even in the era of the Chicago "literary renaissance" he was no more than the patriarch and living legend of the Chicago Press Club, and no one pretended to have read him except Vincent Starrett and some of Starrett's elders of the bookish kind.

Indeed, Starrett, when he sought to pay Opie Read tribute as one of the great neglected writers, in "Buried Caesars," seemed to feel it necessary to apologize for his enthusiasm after committing himself to the statement that Opie Read "is of the line of Shakespeare and Dickens." And yet Starrett was right. What is more, it will come as another surprise to a generation in which "the Hemingway style" has become a cliché, that Opie Read wrote pages and pages of pure Hemingway twenty years before Hemingway was born. Read himself once said he derived his style from McGuffey's Readers and his appreciation of literature from the quotations from Shakespeare therein; and his was certainly the style of the simple declarative sentence—such a style as would naturally be developed by a journeyman printer who not only wrote humorous stories for *The Arkansas Traveler* but hand-set the type from which they were printed and who later had to refine and improve that style to the easy, colloquial cadences necessary for the effective popular delivery of a program of stories to a theater full of people throughout an entire evening.

Read was primarily a story-teller—from the platform; and it is probable that if his genius as a yarn-spinner had come to fruition during the latter-day development of radio, he might have found a sponsor for a full hour's program, because he had the vitality, the voice, the delivery, the personality, and the rich fund of tales within the common experience necessary to hold a large fireside audience for that long a time. When Read wrote out his stories, even at the height of his vogue, he sometimes left the impression that he was only two sticks behind the printer. Pages of sheer genius in dialogue, in narrative, and in invention are followed by pages so carelessly written that you can explain them only on the same grounds you explain certain passages in Dickens—that he was often behind in his copy on a story already partly on the press. He had his great audience in his time—for he was a platform favorite and, also, as a writer he serviced a need, the character of which has changed since the horse-and-buggy days,—the need for something diverting to read while traveling on a railroad train. That need used to be met by the printers of paper-back novels and books of jokes and anecdotes, supplied by news-and-candy butchers in the oil-lamp-lighted, leather-upholstered passenger coaches. It is now supplied by writers for hundreds of magazines and books sold from elaborate newsstands at railway stations and at ship, bus, and airway terminals. Of these writers Zane Grey, who had an estimated fifty-four million readers for his fifty-four published books (he left completed manuscripts of two novels) was a star. It is difficult to imagine any writer having less merit in either style or substance than Grey and still maintaining an audience at all; but his yarns had the requisite setting and they did possess the quality of speed and action which is suited to the accelerated speed of modern travel. It may be that a new generation will "discover" the works of Opie Read and cherish them for the full, fine stories of common life and human emotions that they are, with a humorous, philosophical flavor all their own. There is less likelihood that Grey's novels will find new readers years hence, for each generation produces its own Zane Greys. But Grey's was a success story that was peculiarly American also: he was an impecunious dentist with an urge to write, who published his first novel at his own expense and became one of the richest novelists of our times, owning several large estates and maintaining a yacht on which there was $100,000 worth of fishing tackle. Read, a giant of a man, was a picturesque and picaresque survival of a hearty full-bloodied era. According to many doctors it is impossible for a man to drink as much whiskey as Read boasted he did and still reach any reasonable expectancy of life, so he was a grave reminder that the conditions of our life expectancy have altered since the days when Read was a tramp printer. But both Read and Grey were institutions in their time; they did their work; they nourished the spirit and the dreams of men. *Requiescant in pace.*

BURTON RASCOE.

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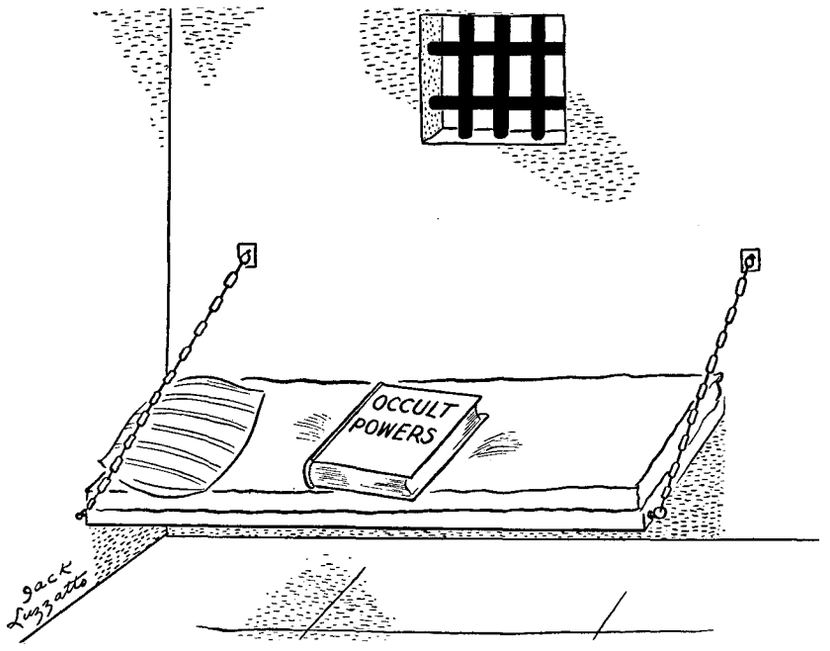
Letters to the Editor: *An Unpublished Thoreau Letter*

From Walden Pond

SIR:—Through the courtesy of Miss Viola C. White, curator of the Abernethy Library of American Literature, Middlebury College, Vermont, I am able to publish for the first time this very interesting letter of Henry D. Thoreau's. His correspondent, Horatio B. Storer, was an authority upon reptiles, whose work Thoreau mentions several times in the 1850's when his interest had become more professional than at the date of this letter written from Walden Pond. Thoreau not only writes down here his own characteristic attitude toward wild life, but makes a surprising contribution to the history of the fauna of the Harvard Yard. In February of 1847 his eyes would have been turned inward on the literary problems of the "Week" and of "Walden."

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.



Concord, Feb. 15, 1847.

DEAR SIR:

I have not forgotten your note which I received sometime since. Though I live in the woods I am not so attentive an observer of birds as I was once, but am satisfied if I get an occasional night of sound from them. My pursuits at present are such that I am not very likely to meet with any specimens which you will not have obtained. Moreover, I confess to a little squeamishness on the score of robbing their nests, though I could easily go to the length of abstracting an egg or two gently, now and then, and if the advancement of science obviously demanded it might be carried even to the extreme of deliberate murder.

I have no doubt that you will observe a greater number of species in or near the College yard than I can here. I have noticed that in an open country where there are but few trees, there are more attractions for many species of birds than in a wooded one. They not only find food there in greater abundance, but protection against birds of prey; and even if they are no more numerous than elsewhere, the few trees are necessarily more crowded with nests. Many of my classmates were quite successful in collecting birds' nests and eggs, and they did not have to go far from the college-yard to find them—I remember a pigeon woodpecker's nest in the grove on the east side of the yard, which annually yielded a number of eggs to collectors, while the bird steadily supplied the loss like a hen, until my chum demolished the whole with a hatchet. I found another in the next field chipped nearly two feet into a solid stump. And in one of the fields near the yard I used to visit daily in the winter the dwelling of an ermine-weasel in a hollow apple tree. But of course one must be a greater traveller than this if he would make anything like a complete collection.

There are many whipporwills and owls about my house, and perhaps with a little pains one might find their nests. I hope you have more nimble and inquisitive eyes to serve you than mine now are—However, if I should chance to stumble on any rarer nest I will not forget your request. If you come to Concord again, as I understand you sometimes do, I shall be glad to see you at my hut—Trusting that you will feather your own nest comfortably without stripping those of the birds quite bare—I am

Yours,
HENRY D. THOREAU.

[Addressed to]
Horatio B. Storer,
14 Winter Street,
Boston, Mass.

Spectra

SIR:—I think Mr. Leonard Bacon overemphasizes a little in suggesting that "Spectra" was a sore point with Harriet Monroe. As I remember it, she was taken in by the hoax, but not to any notable extent; and she never, to me, displayed the slightest irritation over the impulsive and mildly asinine joke which Bynner and I had pulled off. We all thought the thing rather a lark at the time; and if the passage of two decades has tarnished the lark's wings a bit, let us not forget that everybody concerned regarded the episode as of a degree of unimportance which is somewhat belied by later discussion of it. This was no Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament; it was conceived very frivolously, was meant to be taken very lightly, and so far as I know it never even cracked a window-pane.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.

Hillsdale, N. Y.

The Old Violin

SIR:—I would greatly appreciate it if any of your readers can tell me the author, title, or give the complete lines of the following poem and where it was printed:

The Old Violin (supposed title)—
The Auctioneer—

'Twas battered and torn and the auctioneer
scarce thought it worth his while
To auction off the old violin but he held it up with a smile
"What am I bid, good people?" said he,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"

LILIAN GASKELL.

Mount Mary College,
Milwaukee, Wis.

Sarah Josepha Hale

SIR:—I should be very glad to hear of any letters or other unpublished material of Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale's, author, and editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*. I should also like to know the whereabouts of any of her descendants.

I. W. ENTRIKIN.

76 South State Road,
Upper Darby, Pa.

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Tower with Windows

PERSONAL RECORD—1928-1939. By Julian Green. New York: Harper & Bros. 1939. 342 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JACQUES BARZUN

IT is rare enough that a book seems to the reader written as much from his own experience as from the author's. It happens occasionally with novels and poems, but almost never, for obvious reasons, with autobiographies. In the present instance of Julian Green's Journal, special circumstances common to both the writer and his reviewer produce upon the latter the sense that the former has largely lived a mirror image of his own life. Mr. Green is of American descent, educated in France, living there and writing in French, yet feeling so at home with the whole English-speaking world of ideas as to be spiritually bilingual and politically cosmopolitan.

As I write this commentary in English on his translated French text, I therefore feel like Alice through the Looking Glass. In addition to these converse settings, Mr. Green and I share, without being personally acquainted, a common school, the same old Passy district of Paris, much the same sources of cultural modernism, with men like Gide, Cocteau, and Apollinaire as living figures in the foreground, and lastly that curious atmosphere of resentful and nostalgic resignation which the last war induced in all those who grew up in its shadow.

In these circumstances, I find it hard to say how much or how little of intimate communication the reader who comes to these pages as a native-born and war-free American will find in them. I can at any rate guarantee him a wide range of novel sensations. Mr. Green's intermittent record covers the years 1928 to 1939, but the self-revelation plunges far back into infancy, into the pre-war world of a "provincial" Paris, that hidden city of true residents whom the tourist never sees. It is there, and in a few interludes of visits to the American South, that we see the solemn shyness and still humor of a deeply aware artist whose chief passion in life consists in seeing, remembering, and recording.

Superficially, in spite of many shrewd comments about literature and politics, Mr. Green may seem to inhabit an ivory tower. The France which he loves may seem a lost country of the imagination, full of moated granges on the Loire and Paris flats paneled à la Louis XVI. In reality, Mr. Green's tower has windows on all sides—which is more than can be said of a camouflaged pillbox—and he stands there quietly looking out with a sadness and irony not in the least "literary." He is a modern in the fullest and best sense of the term, having humor but no self-consciousness. His admiration of Delacroix is more characteristic than his friendship with Gide and Cocteau; his matter-of-fact display of his own fears is more important than his concern with Flaubert's "method."

As for his style, which is indeed the man himself, it loses considerably in a translation not always accurate. *Couplet patriotique,* for example, does not in the least imply "a stanza of patriotic verse," though it is easy to see why one might think it did. At its best, the English conveys that intense pointillism which is familiar to readers of the novels. It is far from Proust's complexity or Anatole France's lucid void, and yet it is both clear and full—the style of a man for whom concrete things and inner thoughts are equally meaningful, and who has no precious or systematic bias in favor of either.

Jacques Barzun is a member of the history department at Columbia University, and author of a recent book, "Of Human Freedom."

Before the Deluge

THE SILENT DUCHESS. By Anne Green. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1939. 355 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROSEMARY CARR BENÉT

THIS is unlike any of Anne Green's previous work. It is an interesting attempt in the historical field instead of a gay, light modern novel.

It purports to be the autobiography of Marie-Philippine de la Roche-Ferte, later Duchess de Champlutin, a spirited French lady who lived through the Revolution. Marie Philippine was born in August, 1725; we leave her in the closing years of the century, weighed down by her three score years and ten and an entire reversal of fortune. In between, we have the complete story of a lively life, set down supposedly as a memoir for her grandchildren. Marie Philippine had great vitality and she took full part in the curious, fashionable tradition that marked life before the revolution. She describes the endless etiquette, the eternal fixed detail of court life. Her marriage was formal, but turned out very well. She met everyone, Mozart, Rousseau, Louis XV, Louis XVI, a whole wax-works of celebrities. Then, inevitably, we have the deluge. The lonely, frightened, but still spirited Duchess manages to cheat the guillotine and escape to Clairval, the simplest of her estates. There a distracted maid-companion prevails on her to write the story of her life, partly to save her reason and partly to tell her grandsons what it was all about.

Miss Green has ransacked the memoirs and diaries of the time to furnish details and anecdotes to enliven the life of her duchess. She loves odd and curious bits like a "clock representing a Negress who told the hours in her right eye, the minutes in her left." We have detailed and accurate descriptions of gowns and of balls and all the follies of the time. The bibliography at the end shows how widely she read to gather her material.

Julian and Anne Green

The drawback to this book is not the method, but the kind itself. No imagined memoir can be as moving or as extraordinary as a real one, any more than a manufactured pearl, however well done, can rival a real one. Anyone who has read Madame de la Tour du Pin's "Journal d'une Femme de Cinquante Ans" will inevitably compare the two lives. (Miss Green cites this as one of her many historical sources, so the parallel is perfectly legitimate.) Only the Marquise de la Tour du Pin *lived* her spiritual adventures. Nothing more amazing can be conceived than that incredible woman. (She escaped to America after the Terror, taking a piano with her.) The Marquise had the breath of life. The Duchess is a literary figure. One is substance, the other is shadow. The duchess is an amusing character, however, and the attempt to re-create the period a good one. It will be interesting to see what Miss Green does next.

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Old Testament Voodoo

MOSES: MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN. By Zora Neale Hurston. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1939. 351 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THE Old and New Testaments have been radically reëxamined during the last year in the light of psychoanalysis, folk-lore, and fantastic fiction. In "Moses and Monotheism" Freud reappraised the leader of the Jews as a part-Egyptian whose idea of One God was borrowed from the "heretic" Pharaoh Akhnaton—a concept which this reviewer had employed as the basis of a novel published eleven years ago. In "Moses: Man of the Mountain" Zora Hurston has depicted the central figure of the Old Testament not so much as a questioning rebel or an illuminated lawgiver but, chiefly, as the great voodoo man of the Bible.

Miss Hurston's approach is as arresting as it is fresh. In a brief introduction she implies that, to most readers, Moses is merely an old man with a beard—an old man who had some trouble with some Pharaoh about some plagues and, thereafter, led the Children of Israel out of the land of bondage toward the Promised Land. The Bible, obviously, was her springboard. But legends about Moses are not confined to Holy Writ; they appear, strangely transmogrified, in Rabbinical literature, in weird forms through the Near East, in various parts of Africa, and in the curious document "The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses," which many white readers still refuse to accept as a hoax. Miss Hurston has drawn on some of these (as well as Josephus's apocryphal accounts of Moses as an Egyptian general) to present the militant liberator from the point of view of the American Negro. The fancy is whimsical and infectious; the contrasting characters of the shrewdly wise Jethro, the bitterly ambitious Aaron, the voluptuous Zipporah, and the frustrated Miriam are convincing; the setting has the charm of a continually changing panorama. But the whole is less successful than the parts, and the total effect is that of unfulfilled expectation.

The prime disappointment is in the character of Moses himself. The ballance between his royal Egyptian breeding and his Hebraic adaptation is insufficiently adjusted; his growth from a warrior-prince to prophet and seer is weakly motivated; the paradox of his violence and his proverbial meekness is scarcely explicated. Such criticism would seem captious had the author decided to depart entirely from reality; but the book is a series of compromises between the plausible and the bizarre, between the legend as we know it and the legend as it has been transplanted and recolored.

Equally disappointing and even more disastrous to the illusion are the compromises which the author has made in idiom. Her book deals largely with magic, and to maintain that mood the spell must be complete. Here it is wrecked on inconsistency. Much of the descriptive matter is straightforwardly "correct"—some of it is poetic in the traditional "white" manner—but her conversations are (usually) in broad dialect.

The publishers imply that Miss Hurston's fifth book has the same feeling as "The Green Pastures" in its portrayal of the Negro conception of "our" Christian God. But this is unfair to both volumes. If Miss Hurston's fantasy lacks the combination of humor and poignancy which characterized the Roark Bradford-Marc Connelly collaboration, it has a genre quality of its own. It is not a logically projected work, but it has a racial vitality, a dramatic intensity worthy of its gifted author.

A Novel of the WPA

YOU GET WHAT YOU ASK FOR. By Norman Macleod. New York: Harrison-Hilton Books. 1939. 284 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ORRICK JOHNS

PROBABLY a thousand books have been talked, since 1936, by members of the Federal Writers' Project about that promising experiment, and some have come to be written. One at least is now published: "You Get What You Ask For," by Norman Macleod; and it is a novel of sensitive beauty and power. Mr. Macleod has no illusions about the lot of the hunger-haunted writer who drifted to New York City, went through the mill of home relief, usually accompanied by a girl-friend, and finally joined the long hopeless lines of applicants for professional jobs provided by the Federal Government. We know that the projects themselves have produced a whole series of excellent volumes, and that many of those people were incidentally lifted out of the Slough of Despond and guided into new careers. But the majority, through fear, uncertainty, political factionalism, and general confusion—inevitable in the quick setting up of agencies for working artists under government control—were frustrated.

From the jacket of "You Get What You Ask For"

It is the point of view of the discouraged rank-and-filer that is embodied in the hero of this book, Gordon Graham, who passes through all the experiences of relief work, in New York and New Mexico. The adventure—or the ordeal—was fruitful to him, at all events, in arousing his emotions to the explosive point, and producing these pages of corrosive, bitter, and white-hot irony, charged with the poetry of feeling and impression, of sharp and delicate insight. Whether in Harlem hot-spots, in the Greenwich Village poets' cabaret on Seventh Avenue, or in the bosom of the Klaber family uptown, Gordon is the hypersensitized seeing eye and raw subject of the Depression. He moves among mired backgrounds and grotesque diableries that recall sometimes the sordid pages of Dickens; he meets actual persons among the intelligentsia and they are put through their antics under thin disguises indeed.

It is true that when this fine novel touches the subject of the Federal Arts Projects, it is neither just nor wholly true. Mr. Macleod is merciless in dealing with everybody above the rank of junior supervisor, and he is naïve when he attempts to describe the motives of administration. He lampoons people under garbled names; but the direction need not be labored. The novel does not—and should not—give the whole picture. Any attempt to put the dry ice of objectivity into this book would have resulted in a loss of artistic power.

One may object with more point to the lack of a third dimension in the writing about the project, which is rather superficial *reportage,* except where the hero is concerned. And many readers will feel that the crude burlesque and melodrama of the last few pages are out of key. But the book should be read by all who wish to understand the decay of human souls and bodies in the depression.

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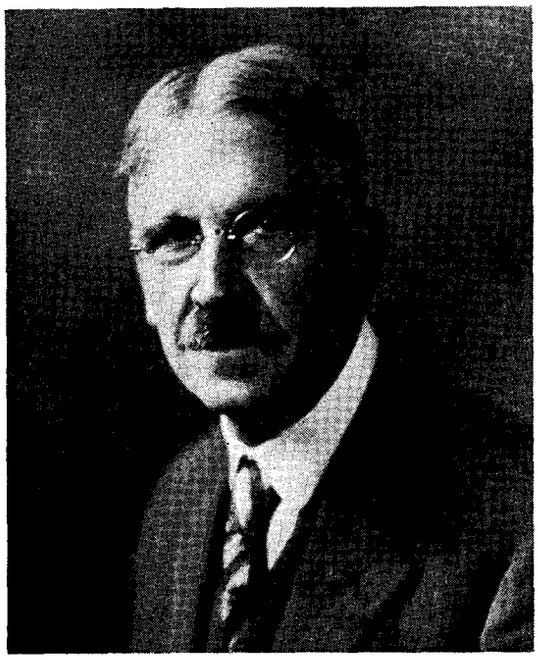
John Dewey at Eighty*

BY ROBERT BIERSTEDT



John Dewey

WHEN the stars of destiny blinked down upon the year 1859, they apparently found it good, for they blessed it with a number of events which have profoundly influenced the cultural history of the Western world. Among the more important of these events were the publication of Karl Marx's "Critique of Political Economy," of John Stuart Mill's "Essay on Liberty," and of Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species," and the births in Europe of Havelock Ellis and Henri Bergson and, in Burlington, Vermont, of John Dewey. The appearance of the three volumes listed below bear eloquent witness to the importance of this last event and help to celebrate the eightieth birthday of the man who, more than anyone else, turned the radical philosophies of the day of his birth into the commonplaces of today.

The word "commonplace" has reference to nothing common in the derogatory sense, but means instead the shared experiences of the race of men who happen to be alive in these centuries and in this culture. These "commonplaces," which at first resemble the "homely truths" a Vermonter might expound around the apple barrel, transform themselves upon reflection into subtle and deeply penetrating observations on the human and historical scene and especially on that segment of it which is peculiarly American. To suggest the essential Americanism of John Dewey, to place the philosopher himself into a cultural context, does not imply, as Bertrand Russell does, that Dewey's pragmatism represents the philosophic expression of a sprawling industrialism and sordid commercialism of a new and rapidly growing capitalistic economy in the land west of the Atlantic, where success became the sole measure of achievement and expediency the only guide to action. Dewey had his own answer to that when he ranked it with those interpretations of philosophy which would assert "that English neo-realism is a reflection of the snobbish aristocracy of the English and the tendency of French thought to dualism an expression of an alleged Gallic disposition to keep a mistress in addition to a wife."

Nor can anyone today associate the word "commonplace" with immutable and incorrigible truth. No such concept appears in Dewey's philosophy, and he remains the man whom no one and no theory has ever persuaded to use "truth" consistently in the singular or to spell it with a capital letter. The commonplaces, if such they be, reside in the scientific method and the possibility of applying it to all the issues of philosophy, not only at those moments of historical hesitation when consequences occur, but through the continuous flow of social process and human behavior. As Mr. Auden has brilliantly—and platitudinously—expressed it, "At any moment in history there always is an orthodoxy." John Dewey's philosophy is perhaps the only one, in philosophy's long history, that can give a naturalistic account of the transition from one orthodoxy to another, whether the heterodoxies submitted to transvaluation relate to a theory of human nature, to a "truth" of science, or to the moral obligations which form the premises of government. The Heracleitan flux need no longer bother us, and this is no slight achievement.

For other achievements the reader will do well to turn to the symposium edited by Professor Schilpp, the first in a projected series of volumes on living philosophers. In addition to a fairly comprehensive biography of its subject, written in illuminating fashion by Jane M. Dewey, Evelyn Dewey Smith, and Lucy Dewey Brandauer, the book presents a series of expository and critical essays by contemporary philosophers, a long reply to both by the master himself, and a bibliography of his writings from the first published paper on "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" in 1882 to the "Freedom and Culture" of today, a list which runs to the astonishing total of sixty-six pages.

Unfortunately, it is possible only to indicate the names of the contributors whom Dewey, in his response, classifies into three groups: those who have been students or colleagues, whose essays are largely though not entirely encomiastic; those whose expositions Dewey considers essentially correct although their conclusions remain at variance with his own; and finally those more critical essays which go so far as to express skepticism, in part at least, as to the success with which Dewey has carried on his philosophic enterprise. To the first group belong Joseph Ratner, George R. Geiger, John L. Childs, William H. Kilpatrick, Donald A. Platt, and John Herman Randall, Jr.; to the second, Gordon Allport, Dominique Parodi, William Savery, and Alfred North Whitehead; and in the third, Hans Reichenbach, Stephen C. Pepper, Edward L. Schaub, Henry W. Stuart, Arthur E. Murphy, Bertrand Russell, and George Santayana.

Reading these essays along with Dewey's brilliant defense, in which his pen often strikes sparks, becomes an adventure in the kind of ideas which in their ceaseless conflict and in some mysterious manner add their elusive content to human knowledge. Taking them all together, thrust and riposte, they forever refute the dictum of Denham, the English poet who believed that

> The tree of knowledge, blasted by disputes,
> Produces sapless leaves instead of fruits.

Although these controversies hardly warrant the name of "dispute" on the one hand, and although they fail to

*THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY. Edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp. Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University. 1939. 708 pp., with index. $4.

JOHN DEWEY. By Sidney Hook. New York: The John Day Co. 1939. 242 pp. $2.

FREEDOM AND CULTURE. By John Dewey. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939. 176 pp. $2.

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terminate in agreement on the other, they all shed light on the central questions of philosophy, and no one can find more strenuous exercises for his intelligence nor finer insights for his intellect than by giving this valuable volume the diligent study it deserves.

Sidney Hook, in his birthday gift, draws an intellectual portrait in which the controversial details recede into relative insignificance, but which serves its own purpose no less admirably. Following a comparatively long chapter on John Dewey the man, he goes on to summarize the whole of Dewey's work under such titles as philosophy and culture, the nature of ideas, truth, logic and action, body, mind and behavior, standards, ends and means, the good society, the frontiers of education, art as experience, nature and man, and the philosopher of American democracy. No man could desire more earnest tribute than this, that one of his students should undertake to do for a less sophisticated public what the contributors to "The Philosophy of John Dewey" do for those who speak the technical language more fluently, and who, in the bargain, does it so well.

"Freedom and Culture" has been reserved for last, primarily because it concerns itself with only a small landscape in that vast horizon over which John Dewey's thought has roamed. Here he begins with an analysis of the conditions which encouraged the development of democracy in America, and concludes that however beneficent in dream or penetrating in vision, the fundamental premises of colonial democracy were affiliated with theories of human nature which no longer command assent. The task to be accomplished, then, concerns the rebuilding of the same political and humane principles on premises more biologically and anthropologically relevant and thus in accord with the lights of modern science.

Dewey abhors a sociological generalization as nature abhors a vacuum, and probably for the same reason. He particularly abhors the kind of anti-scientific generalization which Marxism, in its doctrinal insistency, represents. His submission of "monolithic" Marxism to the test of an experimental logic results in the most devastating critique of it in existence. In fact, Dewey largely sums up the implications of his entire philosophy when he says that his criticism of Marxism

> is not directed then to any generalization made by Marx on the basis of observation of actual conditions. On the contrary, the implication of the criticism is the necessity for *continued* observation of actual conditions, with testing and revision of all earlier generalization on the basis of what is now observed. The inherent theoretical weakness of Marxism is that it supposed a generalization that was made at a particular date and place . . . can obviate the need for continued resort to observation, and to continual revision of generalizations in their office of working hypotheses. In the name of science, a thoroughly anti-scientific procedure was formulated.

In answer to Strachey's defense of intolerance on the grounds of science, Dewey remarks that "literary persons" have, in this country, been most influenced by Marxism, "since they are the ones who, having the least amount of scientific attitude, swallow most readily the notion that 'science' is a new kind of infallibility." For this doctrine alone the angels will have to erase Abou Ben Adhem's name from the top of the list and write there the name of Dewey. For science is not ultimate truth but only — and superbly — a technique for solving problems. In the resolution of problematic situations and in the appeasement of tantalizing doubt lies its entire justification. It is not surprising, then, that Dewey should indict Marxism for its lack of appreciation of the Peircean principle of "fallibilism" in science, nor that he should say, "It is ironical that the theory which has made the most display and the greatest pretense of having a scientific foundation should be the one which has violated most systematically every principle of scientific method."

Positively, Dewey insists not so much on the necessity of democracy in order to pursue scientific investigation (a conclusion which is historically false) but that democracy needs all the efforts of science to give it significance and direction. Freedom itself, like all aspects of behavior, is relevant to a cultural context, and democracy means a particular attitude of human beings and "is measured by consequences produced in their lives." It means also a particular relationship between the human organism and its cultural environment and, in other language, a fundamental faith in the dignity of the human personality, a faith so steadfast and so virile that it can countenance and even welcome disagreement on any grounds whatsoever. Democracy implies, finally, an assurance of the possibility of the application of science to moral problems, and an appreciation of the moral obligation to preserve the humanistic culture with which it so intimately allies itself.

Pinchot
Sterling North

This is Dewey's common faith in politics, but it is also something more. It is a belief in the practical and theoretical efficacy of the scientific method whatever the problems which challenge solution. If this, too, be a faith, it is only necessary to say that faith in science solves more human problems than faith in faith itself, or to assert with Hippocrates that "Science and faith are two things; the first begets knowledge, the second, ignorance." And so John Dewey goes his estimable way, still treading with firm step in the places where men and women encounter trouble and travail, still faithful to the philosophic enterprise to which he dedicated himself so long ago and which continues to stimulate him to activity. Philosophy itself, as Whitehead has remarked, never recovers from the impact of a great philosopher. Had the good Bishop Berkeley survived Dewey, he could not have defined a philosopher as a person who kicks up a lot of dust and then complains because he can't see clearly. No critic, however severe, has ever aimed that indictment at Dewey. And Henry Adams, too, would have to forget that he once identified philosophy with "that amusement which consists of thinking up unintelligible answers to insoluble problems." The insoluble problems have long since succumbed to the rigors of John Dewey's pragmatic logic, and no answer can remain unintelligible when it eases the problematic situations in which human beings find themselves and refers, with a consistency born of constant emphasis, to the cultural and biological matrix in which they happen.

Class of '29

SEVEN AGAINST THE YEARS. By Sterling North. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 326 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES GRAY

STERLING NORTH has had the courage and the craftsmanship to master admirably, in his new novel, a theme which must have tempted and intimidated the imagination of many a writer. He follows a group of bright young men as they trudge blindly, doggedly, or resolutely through the decade after their graduation from college to see what the impact of experience does to their high hopes.

There are seven variations on the theme. Each deals with one of the young men introduced in a pre-

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liminary scene at the University of Chicago commencement exercises in the portentous year, 1929. Karl Gunnarson, who would have been a geologist if life and love had not pressed him so close, becomes instead a worker in an automobile body plant. Faced with a moral choice, he elects to be on the side of labor as organizer and captain of a sit-down strike. Freddy Blucher, on the other hand, nurses his egotism with surly defiance through all the humiliations that a gilded youth may suffer. Deserted by a second wife even before the honeymoon is over, he turns to the glittering promise of fascism to restore his self-esteem.

John Copeland remains infantile in his psychology even after he has lived through all the shocks of Gothic romance as they are abundantly supplied by a private sanatorium for incurable patients. Mark Harboard rises steadily in journalism and the creative arts, making for himself and his charming wife a tidy corner in Grub Street. Thorndike Shepard is a handsome and expensive stuffed shirt, kept in starch by a wealthy widow. The young Greek, Dardanus, improvises fabulously on the success theme and ends up as a W.P.A. writer.

Best of them all I like "Red" Maloney, a lively sinner whose liberal principles lead him at last into the decent revenge of a Minnesota cooperative enterprise. It is this character who makes the final comment on the disaster that has wrecked most of these lives. At the tenth reunion he says bitterly:

> "Our class didn't have to think to get through college—the future looked rosy . . . I wonder if we've improved much in ten years. Perhaps . . . the times were bigger than the men. You will probably misunderstand the least successful member of your class when he says he is bewildered and ashamed for his whole generation."

That surely is unnecessarily severe. For on Mr. North's own evidence three of the seven representatives of this generation proved to be attractive, useful citizens dedicated to domesticity and the service of conscience. But it is not difficult to understand Mr. North's apprehension. He has explored chaos in Chicago with an intimate knowledge of its details, with a sense of drama, and with engaging wit.

James Gray is literary editor of the St. Paul Dispatch.

Fool-Killers and Others

TALES BEFORE MIDNIGHT. By Stephen Vincent Benét. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1939. 274 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MAXWELL

FIVE years is probably not too long a time for most writers to wait before bringing out another volume of short stories, especially if they hope to weed out the slight and the perishable ones from those which are worth a second reading. It has only been two since Stephen Vincent Benét published his last collection of stories, under the title of "Thirteen O'Clock." Not all of the stories in this new volume have been written since then. Some of them, according to the copyright page, go back as far as 1933. Even so, the impression the book gives is of a second choice rather than the cream of the crop.

Of the dozen stories offered here, the longest and best is a folk-tale, "Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer," which has already been published by itself. It is literary but charming, owes a good deal to nineteenth century German romanticism, and yet is as native as turkey and cranberries.

Two other stories in "Tales Before Midnight" have a historical background and are a reflection, a parallel, of our times. Among the rest, one is a political fantasy, one involves a leprechaun who migrated to America, another is the story of a Confederate soldier who didn't surrender at Appomattox, and another is about a small-town doctor who died and went to both heaven and hell. The remaining five are concerned with ordinary, present-day people. Of these stories just one—"Too Early Spring"—really gets the hooks in. It has to do with two youngsters who fall in love a little before it is their turn to, and learn sadly that when virtue and innocence come up against conventional morality, it isn't the conventions that weaken. That may not be an astonishing, or even a new, fact but it remains a dreadful one, and Mr. Benét has not softened it in any way.

In the other modern stories the answers which he gives are, more often than not, based on homely, *Saturday Evening Post* sentiment. His style is always polished and always readable, but it doesn't strike me as ever being much more. One might be satisfied, one might not be justified in asking for more except that, from the beginning of this book to the end, Mr. Benét's ideas and his material both cry for writing that is distinguished and genuine.

William Maxwell is on the editorial staff of The New Yorker.

Recommended Reading

(This column is prepared by the editors of The Saturday Review *by way of registering continued interest in books previously reviewed in these pages. It will include only current books, but none published less than a month ago.)*

THE DEFENCE OF BRITAIN. *By Liddell Hart.* Captain Hart's theories of the value of defensive strategy are of particular interest in view of the nature of the present activities on the western front. (*Reviewed October* 14.)

WATCH FOR THE DAWN. *By Stuart Cloete.* The author of "The Turning Wheels" has written an independent sequel in reverse—a historical novel of the events leading up to the Great Boer Trek. (*Reviewed September* 2.)

THE REVOLUTION OF NIHILISM. *By Hermann Rauschning.* The secret ambitions of the Nazi leadership, revealed by a former member of the Nazi Party. (*Reviewed September* 9.)

ESCAPE. *By Ethel Vance.* A novel which succeeds in dramatizing, through an exciting plot and believable characters, some of the forces of destruction sweeping over Central Europe. (*Reviewed September* 23.)

FROM ANOTHER WORLD. *By Louis Untermeyer.* Reminiscences, by a poet and critic, of many people in the literary public eye, including Amy Lowell, H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Edwin Arlington Robinson. (*Reviewed October* 7.)

DOUBLE FOR DEATH. *By Rex Stout.* An A-1 mystery story in which Mr. Stout's new sleuth, Tecumseh Fox, earns a seat in the front row with the redoubtable Nero Wolfe. (*Reviewed October* 7.)

Erratum

In the review of J. B. Priestley's "Rain Upon Godshill", published in our issue of September 23, a regrettable misprint occurred. On page 10, in the second paragraph, Mr. Priestley's quoted comment on "Time and the Conways" should have read, "Now this has been said to be one of the most brilliant second acts of our time," not "of all time."

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—*Henry Steele Commager,* N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

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What's the Matter with Economics?

(*Continued from page 4*)

lenged. In an interesting little book, "The Useful Art of Economics," Mr. George Soule maintains that economics is not a science, and that its so-called laws are nothing but "an elaborate set of hypotheses." Economics in his view is only an art, but a salutary art, with great possibilities as an effective instrument of human welfare. He would employ the art to this end, and on an elaborate scale. Presumably such a program would not need to take account of economic laws, since these would have no real existence. Everyone will concede, I suppose, that the disappearance of the laws of supply and demand, of diminishing returns, and so on, would enormously facilitate the realization of the economic planning which Mr. Soule proposes. But there is a catch in this somewhere: how can we set up a more scientific economy by stripping economics of all attributes of a science?

But to return to the other question. Economics has steadily strengthened its claims to rank as a science as its inductive methods have developed and spread, and the research worker has tested and supplemented the deductions of the theorist. It makes no pretensions to the accuracy of the physical sciences. Its laws do not operate with the mathematical precision of those of physics and astronomy, which are concerned only with inanimate matter and not with intelligent beings. And since these beings are constantly changing the conditions under which economic laws operate, the most that the scientific economist can do is to indicate tendencies and trends and appraise the probabilities. Many years before the event, an eclipse of the sun may be calculated to the minute; but an eclipse of a business boom can only be indicated as a possibility at some unknown date if in the meantime certain known conditions are not appreciably altered. The lack of assurance of ultimate results in the domain of the social sciences is not to be attributed to defective methods, but to the fact that the subject of investigation is not matter but man.

In considering the economist as a framer of public policies we are on more difficult ground. It is true that the economic theories of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and others of the classical school were developed through the efforts of their authors to find a solution for contemporary national problems. Smith wrote his "Wealth of Nations" when the new-born factory system was struggling for a chance to grow, and found itself restricted by an outmoded mercantile system. Indeed, the fathers of modern economics were so much concerned with public policies, and therefore with politics, that they called their subject political economy; and that name still hangs on. The test of the quality of economic thought in every period is its applicability to the problems of the day.

Many high authorities, including, I believe, Professor John Dewey, have maintained that the questions of what men should do and how they should act lie outside the domain of science. We have been told that the true scientist must concentrate on the *how* of a thing and discard the *ought*. That may be a good rule for the physical sciences, but its application to economics, save in the rigid mathematical sector, is hard to imagine. In any event, there is as yet no such thing as a "pure" science of economics. The research workers are not laboriously digging in all sorts of obscure places solely in the hope of arriving at truth for its own sake; they are searching for materials which may be employed effectively in dealing with problems of the moment.

This does not mean that it is the function of economics to remake the world. Few economists of recognized standing have much enthusiasm for world-regenerating programs of economic planning, and fewer still for a completely planned economy. Being wise men, they decline to rush in where the fools are so anxious to tread. It is not the economists' specific function to frame public policies, but rather to help supply materials which are indispensable in the development of sound policy. Nearly all public problems are many-sided. The framing of public policies, therefore, requires both specialized and collective wisdom, and the economist working alone would be pretty sure to botch the job.

In at least two instances in recent years the United States government has allowed economists with ideas all their own to write a prescription for the nation's ills, and so far as can be judged at close range the remedy has been about as bad as the disease. The late Professor George F. Warren, a champion of Professor Irving Fisher's elastic dollar, was called to Washington in 1933. He closeted himself with his charts in one of the government buildings, with not even a telephone to disturb his meditations. He had a free hand in putting his theories to work and if possible to give the United States the kind of a dollar which, as President Roosevelt said, would have the same purchasing power "a generation hence." What actually happened is familiar history, and we need not go into it here.

Some time thereafter another well-known economist called at the White House and likewise sold the President a bill of goods. This was the brilliant Englishman, Mr. John Maynard Keynes. He had made a wonderful reputation with his analysis of the shortcomings of the Versailles settlement in his book, "The Economic

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Consequences of the Peace," and in that instance his forecasts proved to be accurate. In 1930 he brought forth an elaborate "Treatise on Money," but this time he failed to repeat his former achievement. Professor Alvin H. Hansen called attention to a serious error in one of his basic mathematical formulas, and when the author promised to correct this in a revised edition, he was shown that with the error removed his formulas were reduced to mere truisms.

Undaunted, Mr. Keynes six years later produced another treatise, "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money," and with this he offered an entirely new set of views on ailments and remedies. He was also credited about this time with persuading the New Deal's high command to give his latest prescription a trial. In any event, the New Deal resorted to the "pump-priming," or spending-lending, which Mr. Keynes had endorsed for dealing with unemployment. We have since spent and lent, but the unemployed are still in our midst.

In his recent book, "Full Recovery or Stagnation?", Professor Hansen refers to Mr. Keynes as one of those delightful souls who "cannot live happily for long in contemplation of old ideas, even his own." There are many other economists who cannot contemplate with any appreciable degree of satisfaction the ideas they were proclaiming a decade or more ago, though few, if any, have been able to change so quickly and so often as has Mr. Keynes. Economic theories are still shaped by current conditions. In periods of acute depression people become distrustful of the methods which they believe have landed them in the Slough of Despond. The new, the unorthodox, and the bizarre become popular. Long accepted views are held to be wrong just because they have been long accepted. Apostles of the untried gain not only an audience but sometimes a halo.

These conditions have produced a bumper crop of economic proposals which are alike only in so far as they ignore past experience and contemplate some drastic change in the existing order. Much has been written, for example, in behalf of national economic self-containment. Mr. Jerome Frank, one of the pillars of the New Deal, in his book, "Save America First," argues for a self-sufficient nation, with a highly centralized government and close regulation of economic life. The New Deal, however, has not attained, even for its own policy-makers, the regimentation which such a plan might entail; for Mr. Francis B. Sayre, another of its pillars, has written "The Way Forward," in which he advocates greater freedom of trade and of international interdependence as the way out of economic stalemate.

Since 1933 the advocates of economic nationalism have been quite busy with their pens. Dean Wallace Donham's "National Ideals and International Idols, "Mr. Samuel Crowther's "American Self-Contained," and Mr. Lawrence Dennis's "Coming American Fascism" bear witness to this fact. At the present writing Mr. Keynes is said to be an adherent to this school.

National self-sufficiency, or autarky, is only one of the many forms of economic planning of which we hear so much in these days. Even as these lines are written, two new volumes have come to my desk which attest the variety of suggestions that are now being made for finding the way out of the woods. In one of these books, "Tides in the Affairs of Men" (Macmillan), Mr. Edgar Lawrence Smith sees a clue to the mysterious oscillations between prosperity and hard times in the behavior of the weather, and proceeds to modernize the sun-spot theory advanced by W. Stanley Jevons in 1878. The other book, Gilbert M. Tucker's "Path to Prosperity" (Putnam), is an urbane plea to the country to try the single tax, a remedy suggested by Henry George in 1879. Planning, therefore, is nothing new and, as in these two instances, many schemes advocated today have also been urged upon past generations.

Planning has been called the dream of visionaries and the goal of totalitarians. We need not wonder, then, that those who plan are in such violent disagreement. Someone has said that if all the economists in the world were laid end to end they would reach no conclusion. That is certainly true of the planners. Their schemes run the whole gamut of conceivable economic projects, and some of them are bound to be hundred per cent wrong. Yet the idea itself has gained headway. The people yearn for an economic Messiah. Their ideal economist must speak with the voice of a prophet, notwithstanding the fact that most economists who have essayed such a role have later had to sit in sackcloth and ashes, as Professor Irving Fisher must know. What, then, is the matter with economics? Nothing, so far as this humble scribe can see; it is merely human. There seems, however, to be something wrong with the economists — they are so damnably human, even as you and I.

W. O. Scroggs, formerly professor of economics at Louisiana State University, has been on the editorial staffs of the New York Evening Post *and* The World. *He is now Director of Information Service, Council on Foreign Relations.*

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The Compleat Collector

CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

THE *Times Literary Supplement* recently took John Carter, the alert bibliographical exegete, to task for his use of "colloquial Americanisms" in a *Colophon* paper on the superb library of Victorian literature assembled by Morris Parrish at Dormy House, in the pine barrens of New Jersey. In his youth Mr. Carter Etoned and Cambridged, and thus in theory he has been thoroughly inoculated against the virus whose inroads the *T.L.S.* detects. True, as London representative of Charles Scribner's Sons, he must receive a considerable amount of American mail into which a macule of Yankee patois occasionally intrudes. On frequent visits to this country he has traveled as far into the interior as Chicago and Indianapolis without the services of an interpreter.

It seemed desirable, therefore, to dissect Mr. Carter's *Colophon* essay in order to determine precisely wherein he had trod on the Thunderer's toes. Certainly a shudder rippled down Fleet Street at Mr. Carter's statement that a book was "worth $25, tops." (It might, of course, be argued that the insertion of the comma thoroughly Anglicizes the phrase.) It may have irked the *T.L.S.* to learn that Mr. Parrish's Disraelis "got off to a flying start" with certain titles, and a genuine distress must have greeted the query: "What Victorian novelists *hasn't* he got?" Mr. Carter's declaration that "I shall have flunked my assignment if I have failed to suggest that Mr. Parrish's library is unique of its kind" was perhaps the last straw.

At the risk of precipitating a grave international cleavage, but at the same time giving the *T.L.S.* something real to chew on, I should like to call to its notice a bit of Carterana that I am certain has so far escaped it. Some months ago the manager of Scribner's rare-book department in New York, David A. Randall, cabled Mr. Carter asking him the approximate value of a certain abstruse title. "Five hundred," came the answer, Mr. Randall cabled back the query, "Pounds or dollars?" "Dollars, you dope!" replied Mr. Carter.

The forty-fifth consecutive volume of "American Book-Prices Current" (R. R. Bowker Co., $10) was issued late in the summer, earlier than any of its predecessors. It is regrettable that this commendable industry could not have concerned itself with a more exciting auction season, but this shortcoming can hardly be laid at the door of Editor Jacob Blanck or Collaborator Edward Lazare. The new volume records the selling prices of more than eight thousand items for which the collecting public was willing to pay anywhere from five dollars to $11,700—the latter for the only folio Audubon offered during the year. Only three authors were represented by more than one hundred units each—Kipling with 140, Dickens with 104, and Mark Twain with 102.

The auction room is not and cannot be immediately responsive to the stimuli that agitate the collecting world. Thus John Steinbeck, who is certainly the bibliocynosure of the moment, has yet to be entered in A.B.P.C. Most Steinbeck collectors are young and healthy, and it will be a long day before their literary properties are consigned by order of their estates.

One does not customarily thumb through A.B.P.C. as one does Pepys or Boswell, yet the practice is not unrewarding. Who, for example, outside the purposeful delver into abstruse footnotes, would have imagined a boundary between New York and New Hampshire? There was one, and a pamphlet about it was published at Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1778—a copy of which brought $110 last May. Once Vermont was not, and New York stretched to the middle of the Connecticut River. Or nearly so. That was what the row was about.

There is a sophomore at Williams College who is something of an authority on the thousands of shortcuts whereby the medieval scribe lightened his own task and heightened the difficulties of posterity in deciphering his handiwork. Posterity's burden was eased considerably in 1899 with the publication of Adriano Cappelli's "Dizionario di Abbreviature Latine ed Italiene." It was the copy of this manual in the Chapin Library to which the Williams student sedulously applied himself during his freshman year. He should go far, though not, perhaps, through the Amherst line.

Lucy Eugenia Osborne, custodian of the Chapin Library, cites his diligence in her readable report for 1938-'39. She offers in addition an abundance of data which proves that the Chapin Library is no mausoleum of books, but a living entity in the Williams cosmos. Entering classes are introduced to the collection with pleasantly informal formality, and are told "something of the donor, of the range of material and of the purposes for which it may be used." Exhibits through the year illustrate specific undergraduate courses, particularly in English literature, history, and the fine arts. The custodian herself conducts a course in the history of the printed book.

A junior who was writing a paper on Thomas Shadwell (certainly to the high annoyance of the shade of John Dryden) came upon authentic treasure trove in the guise of thirteen Shadwell first editions. A student in History 19 read the first edition of William Camden's "Historie of the Most Renowned and Vixtorious Princess Elizabeth" (London, 1630). Other undergraduate researches centered about such disparate intelligences as Benedict Arnold, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, and Ambrose Bierce. The rarities in the Chapin Library are not consecrated to the great god Musn't Touch.

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Pygmalion's Mystery

Since the detective novels of Michael Innes, like some of those by Dorothy Sayers, have a distinct literary interest beyond that of their special category, we asked Judge Lynch to review "The Spider Strikes" outside The Criminal Record.—Ed.

THE SPIDER STRIKES. By Michael Innes. New York: Dodd Mead & Co. 1939. 457 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by JUDGE LYNCH

CONNOISSEURS of the detective story have grown to expect something special from the author of "Hamlet Revenge" and "Lament for a Maker," and it is safe to say that in "The Spider Strikes" the pseudonymous Antipodean purveyor of superior thrills exceeds all expectations. He breaks the rules by writing a mystery story without a murder and without a corpse, and makes you like it. He fills his pages with conversation of the most erudite sort and most of it goes down with the greatest of ease. He presents a plot so fantastic as to be almost unbelievable, and then bit by bit reduces it to rational dimensions.

"The Spider Strikes" is the story of an English thriller-writer who would rather be writing about Alexander Pope but finds much more money in recording the adventures of "The Spider"—a character who greatly resembles Mr. Leslie Charteris's "Saint." The novelist has written twenty-seven Spider stories—and then, to his horror, the Spider comes alive. He knows it is The Spider because the physical manifestations of the fictional figure are pranks—and worse—that the author had either discarded from earlier Spider plots because of their audacity, or had planned to put into some future Spider opus.

The author's son gets an Oxford don with detective leanings to come down to the rambling country house and see what he can discover; the house-party is pure Huxley in its treatment, with Wodehouseian overtones.

"The Spider Strikes" is long, leisurely, packed to the gunwales with erudition and learned conversations, not free from dull and ponderous pages, and yet with more real wit, sparkle, and zest than about any other detective story of the year. Distinctly a "literate" mystery and assuredly caviar to the general reader, but the caviar is the very best grade, with every bead a pearl.

A word about Michael Innes himself seems in order. As his pen-name suggests, he is of Scottish origin—his real name sounds like a pibroch. He was born in Edinburgh, attended the Edinburgh Academy, and from the Athens of the North went to Oriel College, Oxford. At present he is a professor of English at the University of Adelaide in Australia, where he does most of his writing before breakfast.

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BORZOI BOOKS

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
A COFFIN FOR DIMITRIOS *Eric Ambler* (Knopf: $2.)	English detective-story writer in Istanbul fascinated by corpse fished from Bosphorus, traces its crime-stained past.	Nothing was too bad for Dimitrios, and his investigator's final discovery will make your eyes bug out.	Masterpiece

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The New Books

Fiction

TO THE END OF THE WORLD. By Helen C. White. Macmillan. 1939. 675 *pp.* $2.50.

Although Michel de la Tour d'Auvergne was a young man of the ancient nobility with an uncle who was a cardinal, although all round him France was heaving with the excitement of impending revolution, he chose to enter the abbey of Cluny, where he dreamed of reviving the simple faith of the eleventh century amidst the skepticism of the eighteenth. Before he finished his novitiate the revolution tossed him out into the world, and when he returned to Cluny ten years later as parish priest of the town, he had learned that it was not within cloisters that the Church of France could be rebuilt. Meanwhile he had been curé of a Vendean parish, one of the "priests of the guillotine," gone on a mission to the pope, and borne his full share of the dangers and hardships which befell the nonjuring clergy who remained in France throughout the Terror.

Michel is not enough of a sinner or an intellectual (perhaps they are the same) to make a fascinating hero. His fundamental faith is never shaken, and the issues which forced so many earnest men to choose between the Church and the Revolution never sharpen themselves in him to a crisis. He solves the contradiction by ignoring it, by believing at once in original sin and in natural virtue and the rights of man, a comfortable *via media*, ideal for archbishops in democratic states. But if Michel was of the stuff of constitutional archbishops, he was also of the stuff of martyrs; he was capable of inflexibility as well as of compromise, and this sympathetic portrayal of his character and that of his leaders and collaborators helps explain the survival of the Church of France in the hour of its severest trial. This is a studious and thoughtful book, soberly, tenderly, sometimes beautifully written, dealing faithfully with an important and interesting aspect of the French revolution, and one usually neglected by historical novelists.

G. M.

ILLUSION IN JAVA. By Gene Fowler. Random House. 1939. 303 *pp.* $2.50.

The island of Krakatoa lies just to the west of Java and it was there, we are told, that the loudest noise ever heard had its origin, in a volcanic explosion some fifty years ago. From this same far-off region comes Gene Fowler's latest book, and to those who anticipate a noise second only to that of Krakatoa (an expectation wholly within reason), it will be a disappointment. There is nothing of the first Fowler novels, the gusty biographies, or of "Salute to Yesterday" in its pages.

"Illusion in Java" is, in fact, a romantic elaboration of a Javanese folk tale built around the early exploits of Ajoks, master musician of the natives. Publication day of this book was October 30 and on that evening an American audience, in Manhattan's Guild Theater, was listening for the first time to the music of a Javanese orchestra, or gamelan. Ajoks played the bonan with the long hammers in a gamelan.

The youth Ajoks loved a girl of the village and was loved by her, though their union was forbidden. He was a stout-bodied village youth, reared beneath the cone of an evil volcano and beneath a tower of superstition. He was different from his fellows in that he owned a great genius for music, and a crooked bull that knelt in prayer and had a tree growing from its back.

The crooked bull served as the instrument to take Ajoks away from his village, to send him on the long journey to the sea and the city. His adventures on the road and at the palace of the mighty Su and in his meetings with the master musician of the time—these served to purge him of his great illusion. He came home to Rindi with less in his hands than he had when he strode hopefully toward the bamboo bridge that was the gateway to the world. But he was cleansed, and fitted to teach his children and the children of others "to sing true songs of their own home-earth."

It is difficult to avoid comparing this novel to "The Good Earth," just as it is difficult to read and forget that Gene Fowler has labored long in the script-rooms of Hollywood. Ajoks in his village, Ajoks on the road with his crooked bull, Ajoks ringing the great bell of Senang, Ajoks in the palace of Su . . . these evoke a picture of . . . well, Paul Muni, get ready.

H. A. S.

SAVE ME THE SUN. By Hassoldt Davis. Holt. 1939. 322 *pp.* $2.50.

Mr. Davis knows as well as loves his South Sea islands; but unfortunately, when he writes about them, he makes them resemble the Latin Quarter. His white characters show the same despair, the same cynicism, the same adolescent hope that people in novels used to have in the 20s. Similarly, they believe that the only way to do "creative writing" is to escape the crass United States. Thus Michael and Judy, who still love each other, but whose marriage has unaccountably gone sour, escape the tumults of their inner as well as their outer lives by fleeing to a tiny South Pacific island. In San Francisco, Michael's novels and Judy's babies alike had been still-born; on Tapu, they produce their children with hardly any difficulty. It all seems a shade too easy, especially for Judy.

As the plot epitomizes the novel of the twenties, so Michael is the hero of the twenties. He thinks of himself as "the eternal Pan upon the pillow" and as "the expert satyr," but he is as worried as Iris March was about "purity," though it is not one of his words. The tiny Judy, half Norwegian, half gipsy, is fresher and more up-to-date, with her history of hav-

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ing betrayed a man who loved her because he wanted to be dictator.

White characters and brown alike have a certain hollowness, as if the author were more interested in the looks of people than in their habitual gestures and cadences. Certainly his book does not bear out Michael's conviction that writing in exotic places is necessarily more creative or even more exotic than what can be done in drab old San Francisco.

K. S.

AGAIN THE RIVER. By Stella E. Morgan. 1939. 306 *pp.* $2.50.

Those of us whose experience with floods has been limited to what we have seen in the newsreels may have wondered just why the victims of these recurrent disasters should tempt fate by returning to the same low land from which they have just been driven. In this novel Mrs. Morgan suggests that the reason is not always simply economic. To Jasper Morton, whose farm lay in dangerous bottomland in West Virginia, "river" was almost a personal enemy from whose challenge it would be mere cowardice to shrink. He loved his land and he intended to remain there come hell or high water. House after house, each built more securely than the last, might be swept away. The river might rise up to claim first his wife, then his daughter. Yet Jasper would not budge. He would simply turn to the Bible for counsel on the construction of an ark, then proceed to rebuild on the exact same spot.

Mrs. Morgan conveys the spirit of these stubborn, indomitable people. But the story moves with monotonous regularity from flood to flood, the dialogue leaves something to be desired, and a certain crudity in the writing is emphasized by a melodramatic, spuriously apostrophic ending.

J. S. M.

International

THE BRITISH WAR BLUE BOOK. Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities Between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939. Farrar & Rinehart. 1939. 251 *pp.* $1.50.

It is most unusual, perhaps unprecedented, for a British state paper to be published commercially in the United States. The importance of this document, containing the diplomatic correspondence and outstanding speeches that resulted in war, makes publication desirable, even necessary. From the German-Polish agreement of 1934 to Mr. Chamberlain's appeal to the German people on September 3 of this year, we can watch the ever-widening breach between Berlin and London, as well as the earnest but futile efforts of other countries to intervene. The most interesting documents, of course, are the telegrams exchanged by Lord Halifax and the British Ambassadors in Germany and Poland. Sir Nevile Henderson works night and day to convince the Nazis that Britain wants a settlement but will fight in defense of Poland. Herr Hitler, whose changes in mood are faithfully reported to London, constantly expresses Germany's fear of encirclement, demand for a free hand in the East, and desire for friendship with Britain. By the end of August, it is clear that their aims are completely irreconcilable.

An elaborate table of contents and brief summary of the documents enhance the value of this book as a reference work. Sir Nevile Henderson's final report on his labor, later published as a white paper, will be included in later editions, and is available separately to purchasers of the early editions which did not contain it. The volume embraces almost every diplomatic item that is available at present.

J. F. G.

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The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
NO WIND OF BLAME *Georgette Heyer* (Crime Club: $2.)	Wastrel husband of rich and flighty Englishwoman pinked in neighbors' garden. Insp. Hemingway, despite lunatic interruptions, solves it.	Method of murder ingenious—if not quite believable. Priceless characters and spate of cock-eyed conversation make chapters hum.	Highly enjoyable
SEVEN DEAD *Jefferson Farjeon* (Bobbs Merrill: $2.)	Septuple slaying in English coast town takes Insp. Kendall and journalist helper to France where 8th killing and solution follow.	From super-grisly beginning, through Buchanish goings-on in Boulogne, to amazing and unexpected finish. an outstanding job.	First class
THE FIRST SAINT OMNIBUS *Leslie Charteris* (Crime Club: $2.50)	Creator of "Saint" traces his career from beginning by means of baker's dozen of bang-up stories.	Unalloyed thrills, in novelettes and short stories—to be taken in homeopathic doses for proper appreciation.	Spine-tingler
8 FACES AT 3 *Craig Rice* (Simon and Schuster: $2.)	Pretty girl in very tough spot saved from murder charge by dance-band press-agent and licker-loving blonde.	Some puzzling business with clocks, hair-raising auto rides, slick legal sleuthing, and climax with a punch.	Good
GUNSTON COTTON: SECRET AIRMAN *Rupert Grayson* (Dutton: $2.)	Redoubtable secret agent circumvents gang of international thugs who would smash various European capitals from air.	Thrills in the air, on land, and in concrete dug-outs, with "Gun" Cotton and beauteous Coral out-shooting all comers.	Time-killer

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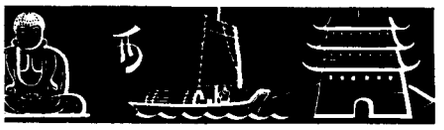

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ech-e-lon (ĕsh'ē-lŏn; shē'lŏn'), *n.* [< Fr. < *échelle* < Lat. *scala*, ladder]. *Mil.*, the arrangement of a body of troops in the form of steps; *Nav.*, an arrangement of a fleet in steplike formation: —*v. t.* and *v. i.* to form or station in such an arrangement.

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By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

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	146-Q	147-Y		148-F	149-I	150-U		151-C	152-Z	153-Q	154-O	155-K		156-B	157-I		158-I	
159-Z	160-M	161-T		162-J	163-U	164-F		165-H	166-N		167-E	168-Y	169-U	170-T	171-C		172-E	
173-D	174-W	175-N	176-K		177-Z	178-M	179-T	180-G										

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Exclamation enjoining silence.

B. Wreathe; complicate.

C. City in White Russia.

D. Lake.

E. Investigations, searches.

F. Yokel.

G. Novel by R. L. Stevenson (2 wds.; 1887).

H. Manufacturer's collection of samples.

I. On familiar terms (comp.)

J. Footless.

K. Author of "The Constant Nymph."

L. Cry of bacchanals.

M. Make-believe (comp.)

N. Small violin (Fr.)

O. English composer (1857-1934).

P. Raised; attentive (listening).

Q. Opera by Gilbert and Sullivan.

R. Imitated or repeated.

S. Arm of the North Sea.

T. Badly garbed (comp.)

U. Pertaining to a stepmother.

V. Son of Levi.

W. Author of Virginia statute of religious freedom.

X. Famous Russian diamond.

Y. American humorous author and illustrator (1863-1935).

Z. Translator of Dante (1827-1908).

WORDS

						43	8	99	145	53	114				
						156	85	7	34	47	131				
						171	151	21	3						
						98	119	61	173						
						15	1	121	109	70	172	134	167		
						117	46	164	63	124	68	148	80		
						180	91	126	6	60	129	105	75		
						55	165	101	66	16	36				
						149	140	10	158	57	84	157	38	20	
						162	106	24	82	44	96				
						176	143	120	71	137	155	32			
						133	79	86	104	100					
						93	178	54	26	69	135	11	160		
						14	108	175	132	166	35	102	138		
						13	154	58	27	141					
						95	81	87	9	139	103				
						12	122	33	37	48	72	146	153	29	
						23	118	94	112	18	76				
						17	56	31	65	130	40	74	50		
						83	51	170	42	136	179	161	64	89	110
						163	115	90	150	144	127	169	97		
						39	52	107	30	67	125	77			
						28	123	4	111	78	45	49	174	142	
						5	59	73	2	25	116				
						168	41	62	147	113	92	19			
						88	128	159	177	152	22				

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

WHAT to do after the World's Fair—Read Books. ☞It is De Quincey weather in Old Q.'s winter hangout, an eyrie called *Sciatica*. Outside a gale is blowing; and immobilized with crural twinges the old man is happy with ½ of a fine set of De Quincey, which Mr. Raymond Otis of Wisconsin found very cheap (as a result of a note in this column months ago) and divided with us per agreement. ☞We got every other volume, the evens, and in Vol. 16 have found an anti-Nazi murder yarn we never read before, "The Avenger." ☞For nights of storm, De Quincey is perfect. ☞We were delighted to see, in the subway, a young woman reading Don Marquis's *Old Soak's History of the World* and chuckling to herself. ☞We were so pleased we gave her a duplicate copy of Richardson Wright's *Grandfather Was Queer*, which we were carrying. ☞She probably thought we were too. ☞We have tried many times to persuade the publishers to bring out an omnibus volume of the best of Don Marquis. ☞When Old Q. was reproached for speaking sharply about his favorite city (Philadelphia) he told the plaintiff to look up p. 140 of Marquis's *archy's life of mehitabel*. ☞It amuses us that Longines have named a new and swanky model of watch for Walt Whitman—who probably cared less about punctuality than any man who ever lived. ☞It's a good thing Old Q. will never have time or space or energy to list all the things that amuse him. ☞We wonder how many readers of D. Sayers' *Murder Must Advertise* (now in the 25c. Pocket Books) know what is "a little rubber cosh" found in the dead man's pocket on p. 273. It's a blackjack or "life preserver." ☞Why do people squawk about having two Thanksgivings this year? It seems to us very reasonable: we've got a great deal to be thankful for.

☞The National Arts Club is holding its annual show of New Books in the club's galleries at 15 Gramercy Park. This is the 34th of these always interesting exhibits, open to the public without charge (week days 11 to 6; Sundays 2 to 6). ☞About 2,000 new books from nearly 100 publishers are on exhibition, and special entertainment features. Frank Chapin Bray is chairman of the show, and orders for purchase can be placed at the gallery itself. ☞The Library Binding Institute, 501 Fifth Avenue, now issues a new journal *Book Life* "to encourage longer life for books," edited by Pelham Barr. ☞Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach kindly sends us a reprint from the American Antiquarian Society Proceedings, *The First Theatrical Company in America*. Dr. Rosenbach publishes the exciting discovery that a theatrical company came from Spain to Peru, and was performing at Callao (the seaport of Lima) as early as 1599, playing the dramas of Lope de Vega. ☞That was 150 years before the earliest performances of Shakespeare in North America. ☞John Howell, well known San Francisco bookseller (434 Post Street) has issued a limited edition (225 copies at $3.75) of *After Sunset*, hitherto uncollected poems by the late George Sterling. Included are the "Ode to Shelley" and "The Pathfinders" and others which have been praised as among Sterling's best. ☞The book was edited and printed by two young men, R. H. Barlow and Groo Beck, working in the corner of a living room on Telegraph Hill. ☞The American Institute of Graphic Arts this week honors the admirable book-design craftsmanship of Helen Gentry by an exhibition at 115 East 40. The work this "half-pint pioneer" is doing at Holiday House is well known to the discriminating. ☞If we were a publisher we'd have a look at the paintings by young American Indians at the F. A. R. Gallery, 19 E. 61, until November 18. The announcement card shows remarkable illustrative charm. ☞Robert Hunt, who has been four years with William Morrow & Co., now joins the new firm of Duell, Sloan & Pearce as advertising director. ☞The speakers at the November 14 Book & Author Luncheon, Hotel Astor, November 14, will be Carl Sandburg, Carl Carmer, and Lewis Gannett. Tickets $2.25 at local bookstores or from the A. B. A., 35 East 20.

☞Speaking of San Francisco, the Lively Little Colt Press sends out a charming folder about its first year's adventures. It has moved to 615 Commercial Street, in a building once the famous Mint Restaurant. ☞Colt's first publication—*Lola Montez, the Mid-Victorian Bad Girl in California*, by Oscar Lewis—was promptly sold out. Among its forthcomers are *Madame Moustache* by Joseph Henry Jackson, and a reprint of Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manner of the Americans*. ☞But they shouldn't call her "Mrs. Anthony Trollope," which gives the wrong impression. She was Mrs. Thomas Anthony Trollope—the mother, not the wife, of the famous Anthony. ☞We alluded to Robinson Crusoe's gun: Mabel Zahn of Sessler's (Phila.) tells us that firm bought the old fowling piece back in 1926 and sold it to an American collector (whom she does not identify). ☞Some Christmas shoppers will be pleased to hear of the Trovillion Press reprint ($2.50) of *Delightes For Ladies, to Adorne Their Persons* (1609), one of the early books on beauty culture and cooking. ☞Mr. and Mrs. Trovillion discovered the old work in the British Museum. We like the quotation warning against certain 17th century toothpastes, "lest a gentlewoman be forced to borrow a rank of teeth to eat her dinner." ☞Only 175 copies are available, at the Trovillion Private Press, Herrin, Illinois.

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